Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, various works are undertaken for pollution abatement in major rivers including Ganga through interception and diversion of sewage for its treatment and construction of Sewage Treatment Plants and Low Cost Sanitation. Under the Ganga Action Plan-(GAP) Phase I & II, 1747 mld. (million litres per day) of sewage treatment capacity has been created so far. With the pollution abatement works completed so far under Ganga Action Plan, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown discernible improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality as per the water quality monitoring undertaken by independent reputed institutions in the country. The National Environment Policy, 2006 also advocates an integrated approach for management of river basins by the concerned river authorities, ensuring maintenance of adequate flows, adherence to water quality standards throughout their course in all seasons and protection of land resources.

Expansion of forest cover

1273. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the present extent of green cover in the country, in terms of percentage;

(b) whether it is a fact that the green cover has not inched forward beyond 19 per cent;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in terms of the forest policy of 1950s, the green cover was envisaged as 25 per cent and in terms of this, we have not added to our forest cover and the danger of global warming is looming over our head; and

(d) the steps Government are considering to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The present Forest and Tree Cover (FTC) in the country is 23.68%.

(b) No, Sir. There is marginal increase in the forest cover. The status of forest cover in the country is as under:

Assessment year	1997	1999	2001	2003
% of geographical area	1927	19.39	20.55	20.64

(c) No, Sir. The National Forest Policy, 1952 aimed at maintaining l/3rd of land area under forests. In spite of making all efforts, we are able to maintain 23.57 forest land, 20.64 forest cover and 23.68% Forest and tree cover.

(d) The government of India has taken following steps to achieve 33% Forest and Tree Cover (FTC) in the country:

- Guidelines have been issued by Government of India on 15-12-2004 to the States for rationalization of regulatory provision about felling and transport of trees grown on private lands.

- The Ministry has mooted a Multi-Stake Holder Partnership (MSP) framework for forestation.
- States have been advised to constitute State-level coordination committee under chairmanship of Chief Secretaries for eliciting cooperation of all land-owning Departments for contributing towards increase in FTC.
- Under National Afforestation Plan (NAP) Scheme Rs. 1180.72 crores were released to support 729 FDA projects through 24,215 JFMCs for treating a total project area of 9.36 lakh ha.
- A restructured scheme for Grants-in-Aid for Greening India was launched in 2005-06 to promote production and use of quality planting material in tree planning.
- As a follow-up of the Mid-Term Appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan, a new scheme for afforestation involving Panchayati Raj Institution for tree planning on non-forest lands is mooted.
- Establishment of two new Eco-Task Force (ETF) battalions for eco-restoration of degraded areas was mooted by the Ministry, in addition to supporting the existing four ETF battalions.
- State Government and Union Territories Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement a comprehensive Media Plan to create awareness about tree planting.

Illegal killing of endangered animals

†1274. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that lion, leopard and tiger population is fast dwindling in India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that over 10 years, their population has reduced to less than half;

(c) the sort of protection being provided to these wild animals; and

(d) the details of cases booked for illegal killing of these animals in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) Tiger estimation figures relating to four States (Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra) as per the refined methodology indicate a decline in tiger population in areas outside tiger reserves and protected areas. However, this has not been reported for lion and

† original notice of the question was received in Hindi.